RNA FOR A BETTER LIFE IN THE HEIGHTS

RIVERVIEW Neighborhood Association

October, 1993

232 Ogden Avenue - Jersey City, N.J. 07307 - (201) 798-0493

RNA IS NOT AFFILIATED WITH ANY POLITICAL PARTY, ORGANIZATION OR ELECTED OFFICIAL

THE NEW CHAIR: A Comfortable Chair

You're probably sitting on your couch, or possibly in the water closet, reading the inspiring thoughts I have written for your enjoyment this month. As I start this, please don't get too comfortable - open your mind and try to appreciate some recent developments in our community that I believe are very encouraging.

First of all we had a very informative meeting last month with Police Captain Thomas Kane of the North District. He spoke to our group about the changes he has implemented since being appointed police commander of the northern area of Jersey City stretching from Journal Square to the Union City border. He recited the improved statistics on arrests made in the North District over the past few months, which in all respects indicate a new invigorated enforcement of law and order. He spoke of the plans for increased community policing, repairs to the very dilapidated precinct house on Central Avenue, the inauguration of the scooter patrol and the present state of manpower and the prospects for an increase in hirings if extra federal and state fundings are granted. In addition, he has organized and successfully carried out large drug busts and prostitute round-ups. His concern is to address the quality of life problems that affect our communities and neighborhoods.

On Monday, September 27th at the New #28 School, the Heights Coalition of Neighborhood and Block Associations (HCNBA) sponored a question and answer meeting with our newly elected councilpeople. In attendance, were Nancy Gaynor (Ward C), Bill Gaughan (Ward D), and our three council-at-large, Tom DeGise (Council President), L. Harvey Smith and Fernando L. Colon. The subjects they discussed included the following:

1) the City will renovate the park at the corner of Cuneo Place and Ogden Avenue and dedicate it to the memory of Janet Moore by next spring,

2) the City will also renovate the park located at Palisade Avenue and Hoboken Road (by the depressed highway),

3) Mountain Road is going to be reopened and in the process, the remaining parts of the old 300 Steps will be removed because of the danger to public safety,

(continued on page two)

A CONCERT IN OUR PARK

About one hundred friends and neighbors gathered in front of the gazebo or sat on the benches in Riverview-Fisk Park on September 23rd to listen to a live music concert. The free concert was part of the City Spirit Gazebo Music Series held in three of Jersey City's neighborhood parks (including Hamilton and Van Vorst Parks). This concert was made possible by the combined efforts of Joey George, director of City Spirit, Councilman Bill Gaughan and sponsored by Christ Hospital.

The performing group, called the "Sound of the City" did a marvelous job interpreting the golden oldie hits of the 50's and 60's. They sang great tunes like "Since I Don't Have You," "Under the Broadwalk," "I Believe" and "Hang On Sloopy." In spite of a light rainfall, most of the listeners stayed and thoroughly enjoyed the show.

Some people even did some dancing in the street, which had been closed to auto traffic for this event. Families were out enjoying this use of our Park and the small children were a delight to watch as they tried out thier own unique dance steps. All in all everyone seemed to be enjoying this rare occurrence. (The last official concert held in our Park was in 1987.)

Joey George assured the audience that this concert is a fore-runner of many such concerts that the City hopes to present next spring and summer throughout our local parks. I say go for it! Our Riverview-Fisk Park never looked or sounded so good!

In addition, RNA would like to thank the many City employees who helped behind the scenes to make this event a great success: the Police Department, the Division of Parks and Forestry, the Bureau of Traffic Engineering, and the Department of Public Works.

Maria Tuzzo

COMING EVENTS

RNA MEETING: TUESDAY, OCTOBER 12th AT 7:15 PM

AT THE HARBOR VIEW HEALTH CARE CENTER

a) GUEST SPEAKER: **Mayor Bret Schundler**
b) **Review proposals for the Cuneo Place Park**
c) **Discussion of the Sept. 27 Coalition Meeting**

THE NEW CHAIR (continued from page one)

4) the City is projecting 300 Community Police to be assigned to 140 different neighborhood beats throughout the City,

5) there does not look like there will be an effort to enforce a late-night curfew in Jersey City,

6) the placement of more garbage receptacles on Palisade Avenue and other major thoroughfares in the Heights, along with the City's promise of better monitoring and enforcement of the garbage pick-up by the private contractor (who will also be responsible for the pick-up of the public receptacles on Central Avenue to minimize the debris problem), and

7) the requirement of having newly-hired City workers live within the City limits will not be able to be enforced.

Now, about that comfortable couch - GET UP! GRAB THAT BROOM AND DUST PAN! PLEASE GO OUT AND CLEAN UP IN FRONT OF YOUR PROPERTY (whether you live in a house or apartment building)! Make a difference! If we all make an effort for a better neighborhood, the responsibility will be spread out over a larger group and. . . the faster you can get back to your couch.

Ernest Quintero, Chair

MEETING MINUTES

The guest speaker at the September 14th meeting of RNA was Captain Thomas Kane, North District Police Commander. Also present was Officer Lancelotti, our new community patrolman, as well as Councilman Bill Gaughan. Capt. Kane discussed the state of the North District and the improvements that have taken place since he became commander in May 1993.

Kane talked about the increased visibility of the narcotics squad, resulting in more search warrants and consequently more arrests in the North District. He has inaugurated several "sweeps" over the past summer that resulted in 41 arrests and 141 summonses. Acknowledging that most of the complaints in the North District are "quality of life" problems (including graffiti, noise and general unsavory behavior), his plan is to have these sporadic "warrant sweeps," whereby people with outstanding warrants will be arrested.

The Captain emphasized the importance of the City's community service program which is putting walking patrolmen back into the neighborhoods. While there are only seven community-based police in the North at present, the City is planning to increase the number to 70. He also spoke about his recent crackdown on prostitution on Tonnelle Avenue - particularly near the Spinning Wheel Motel. He also discussed plans to organize a softball game between the police and the Mayor's staff in Pershing Field. Everyone would be invited to the event which he hopes will serve as an opportunity for citizens, police and city officials to talk and get to know each other. (The softball game took place on September 30th.)

After our coffee break, Councilman Gaughan discussed the progress he has made with the following local projects:

a) Holland Street (the cobbled stone road that connects Paterson Plank Road to Palisade Avenue and crosses under Ogden Avenue, north of the Park) has been reopened. It is now a one-way street going from east to west;

b) the Ogden Avenue Bridge (the section of Ogden that crosses over Holland Street) is being submitted to the N.J. "Adopt-a-Bridge" Program for funding for its renovation;

c) Mountain Road is in a state of disrepair and therefore plans and funds are being allocated before it can be reopened;

d) Tom Dolan, the Councilman's aide, researched that there are a total of 52 light poles and fixtures on Palisade Avenue between Jefferson Street and Paterson Plank Road. BUT while there are 41 poles on the west side of the Avenue, there are only 11 poles on the east side. In addition it was reported that the street lights on the west side of the Avenue were very dim. A memo has been sent to the Bureau of Traffic Engineering to correct this problem;

e) the City has begun to use the labor of county prisoners to clean up Palisade Avenue; and

f) there are three buildings on Ogden Avenue that are being considered for demolition because of their disrepair.

Other business: The Heights Coalition (HCBNA) is sponsoring a program in which schools will have a "bicycle rodeo" for their students. Each Coalition association-member is being asked to donate two bicycle helmets. RNA voted to purchase two helmets for this program.

After a discussion, RNA members chose to raise the following issues with the councilpeople at the HCBNA meeting of September 27:

1) the need for more trash receptacles on Palisade Avenue,

2) the retaining wall and fence that separates Riverview-Fisk Park from the Palisade cliff needs to be repaired and the possibility of some immediate maintenance,

3) the stray animal problem is getting worse, not only with cats but now with a family of raccoons that is bothering the residents,

4) the homeless problem in the Journal Square Path Station, and

5) there are too many people hanging out after the 10 PM curfew in the Park.

Ruth Conrad won the 50/50 raffle. On a final note, the family of Bea Higgins sent a thank you card to all the members of RNA.

Suzanne Maroon, Secretary

LETTER FROM THE MAYOR:

We have received many letters from residents who are frustrated with the lack of parking in Jersey City. To address this issue, I have asked our Departments of Planning and Traffic Engineering to devise a plan to increase the availability of street parking.

As a neighborhood association, I am writing to you to ask for your help in developing this plan. Please discuss this issue with your members and ask them for suggestions that would help us increase the number of parking spaces in your neighborhood. Please make sure that your recommendations are as specific as possible.

Thanks for your cooperation. If we work together, I think that we can solve this problem.

Mayor Bret Schundler
September 24, 1993

CONRAD'S CORNER

I remember when we had a large immigration of Jews to Palisade Avenue around 1920. We then called the street Palestine Avenue and almost everyone spoke a little yiddish.

There was Lenni Casner's father's grocery store on the Avenue where we used to get our milk in a can. Benowitz and Schwartz had a fixture shop and Benny Shifrin's father was running another factory squeaking his circular saws all day long. Then there was Lewis Patt, the tinsmith who fixed chimneys. Morris Pesin's younger brother sneaked out of the house at night and drowned in the Riverview Park fountain.

During the Jewish holidays, the Jews built huts on top of their houses for what was called a Laub-Huetten fest and we all ate matzos, some with butter when there were no Jews around. But it's all so long ago there is no one around here except Jack Schwartz and myself to reminisce. There doesn't seem to be any old timers still around, most of them have left town for Florida a long time ago.

It's too bad none of this was documented at the time, I was too young and Morris Pesin had moved to the Bergen section. Then all of a sudden the Jewish population in the Heights was replaced with an influx of Italians who were laying new trolley car rails. The whole Jewish community changed almost overnight, so that what little Jewish history was saved is in the main Jersey City Library. Now the Italians are being replaced with Puerto Ricans and other latino cultures.

Since more German and Yiddish were spoken at the time than English it was like living in a foreign country. We often had to stop and think how do you say it in English. But that was soon over when we began to tangle with the Irish Catholics and the Sicilian Italians.

I remember going over to the Checkman House one afternoon and there was old man Checkman crying. I said, "What's the matter Whilhelm?" and he told me something terrible had happened. Sally, his daughter had married a Catholic. He got over it but it wasn't long before his other three daughters also married Catholics. But then Sally turned Catholic and that was just about the last straw.

Now, a latino population is moving into our community. In the next ten years, there will not even be a trace of every having a large Jewish or Italian population in the Heights. This was because their children were more educated and inter-married - so now only a few old-time orthodox Jews are still around. In ten years every last one of them will be gone and it is doubtful if the younger generation will pick up the torch and carry on. Even North Hudson Jewish Community Center has been torn down to make way for a Jehovah Witness Community Center.

It was another world before the First World War. I remember Magid, the tailor on Griffith Street, when he took the N.R.A. to court. That action probably helped change the whole course of history because it got us into World War II later on when Franklin Delano Roosevelt could no longer become a dictator like Hitler.

Then there was Mrs. Grosinger, who was Morris Pesin's sister, and her brother Meyer who ran Grosinger's in the Catskills where Eddy Fisher sang "Oh My Papa." I made a model for their airport in the Catskills at the time. Now I have heard that Grosinger's in the Catskills has been torn down.

Not to be forgotten was the beautiful Jewish Community Center on Bergen Avenue by architects Taylor and Levi, which was an architectural gem. There were lectures by John Haines Holmes, Rabbi Steven Weiz, Norman Thomas and Samuel Seabury when they got Mayor Walker out of office.

When the City planned to buy the Community Center the building was emptied of all its tenants. Then our politicians decided not to buy it and it was left empty for some time. Rabbi Berman then abandoned the building, all of which ended the main Jewish cultural center in Jersey City. A large number of Jews at the time were becoming senior citizens.

September 27,1993

REMEMBERING: MY FAMILY

Growing up in a fairly large Italian family was a bit of an event in one's life. We all had our own chores to do around the house as Mother was kept busy with the cooking and washing. The radio was always going with the Italian soaps, and they almost always made you cry. Wash was a whole day's work as the white clothes were bleached and boiled in a large pan on the coal stove. The dark clothes were done separately. Later years, they had a wet wash which was sent out and returned "wet dry", but had to be hung out to dry. If it was a bad day, the clothes were hung across the kitchen at night.

Cooking took a lot of preparation, because there were no canned or frozen foods. You bought everything fresh from the vegetable man that came around in a truck or horse and wagon. There was also a fish man that came around on Fridays, an egg man and, of course, the iceman for that ice box.

As the older ones went to work, the taking care of the youngest was passed on to the next family member. Mother and Father were the head of the family. There were times we couldn't get what we wanted but settled for second best.

Dinnertime was family time and you were expected to be there because it was routine every day of the week. The menus didn't change very much. We talked and argued but never really got mad - only for the moment. Sometimes after dinner, we would sit around and play Lotto (almost the same as bingo).

Sunday of course was church day and you didn't dare miss it. After Sunday dinner, your time was your own to go out for a walk on the Avenue and stop for a soft cream or go to a movie. There were times when two of us didn't have enough to get into the movies, so we would talk the ticket taker to let two of us in for the price of one. It was nice being part of a big family as you were never alone or bored as the children of today seem to be with so much more.

Jack Rea

OCTOBER

The month of pumpkins, scarecrows, witches, globins, and trick or treating.
Falling of autumn leaves,
Happy Halloween to all!

Madeline Tuzzo Rea

HAVE A SAFE AND HAPPY HALLOWEEN

There are certain rules your children should be aware of when they go trick or treating. Candy should only be accepted if it is protected by its wrapper. It is probably safer to tell the kids not to eat any of their treats, until they bring it home and a parent can inspect it. They should only go trick or treating with either a group of kids, a parent or an older sibling.

GALA POTPOURRI CONCERT

The Jersey City Cultural Arts Commission will present a Gala Potpourri Concert featuring the Lubo Opera Company. The performance will take place on Saturday, October 9th, 1993 at 3 PM. The location is Saint Peter's College Auditorium at Kennedy Blvd. and Montgomery Street. ADMISSION IS FREE.

SPECIAL RNA ACTIVITIES FOR THE FALL SEASON

1) **ANNUAL PARTY FOR HARBOR VIEW RESIDENTS:**

Volunteers are needed to serve refreshments and help entertain the guests at our annual holiday party for the residents of the Harbor View Health Center. Donations of dietetic baked goods are needed. No date has been decided yet, but the party will take place in December. If you can help in anyway, please attend the October meeting to assist in the planning.

2) **RNA FOOD AND TOY DRIVE:**

RNA will again be accepting donations of nonperishable foods and toys (either new or used, but in working condition) for distribution by the Salvation Army for the holiday season. These donations can be brought to the October 12th, November 9th and the December 14th meetings of RNA. Cash donations are acceptable and will be disbursed according to the donor's wishes. For information regarding other locations where these donations can be dropped off, please call Maria Tuzzo at 659-2245 after 6 p.m.

3) **HOLIDAY CAROLING:**

Anyone interested in going Caroling this Christmas should come to the October 12th meeting. We will organize the event for the Holidays if there is sufficient interest and willing participants.

Religious Donations for the Needy

I will take any new or used small religious statutes or medals or any type of rosary beads that you would like to discard. They will be forwarded to a Catholic brother who in turn will distribute them to inmates or the homeless. Please bring these items to the next RNA meeting on October 12th. Thank you for your charity.

Jack Rea

REMEMBER COLUMBUS DAY ON OCTOBER 11th.

CONTRIBUTE TO OUR NEWSLETTER

RNA is soliciting material for our newsletter. We are interested in anything you as our readers are interested in. Would you like to thank someone? Maybe you would like to complain about something. How about suggestions to help improve our neighborhood or City?

There's always a recipe, whether it is a family heirloom or something you just found out about. Creative writing is always wanted - whether it is a poem, a short story or a memory about a local event or person.

Drop off contributions in the mailbox, attached to the gate, at 232 Ogden Avenue. Mark the envelope, "RNA NEWSLETTERS."

NEWSLETTER STAFF

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RECYCLE YOUR GARBAGE AND DISPOSALS - IT'S THE LAW!

Here is the official list of recyclable materials that are collected in Jersey City:

PAPER: NEWSPAPERS, MAGAZINES, CARDBOARD, GIFT BOXES, JUNK MAIL, SCHOOL PAPER, OFFICE PAPER, COMPUTER PAPER, TELEPHONE BOOKS

PLASTICS: SODA BOTTLES, MILK CONTAINERS, WATER CONTAINERS, FOOD BOTTLES

GLASS: SODA BOTTLES, BEER BOTTLES, FOOD JARS

CANS: ALUMINUM, TIN, STEEL (NO CHEMICAL OR PAINT CANS)

Our neighborhood pick-up day is WEDNESDAY. Remember, paper products should be separate but glass, plastic, and metal can be grouped together. For more information, call the INCINERATOR AUTHORITY: 432-4645.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to announce the official expansion of the northern boundaries of the Riverview Neighborhood Association from Bowers Street to Congress Street on both Palisade and Ogden Avenues. (Riverview Neighborhood Association will now represent residents living on Palisade and Ogden Avenues from Congress Street to Cuneo Place.)

Adopted: December 12, 1992

SEE YOU AT OUR NEXT RNA MEETING ON TUESDAY, OCTOBER 12TH AT 7:15 PM.

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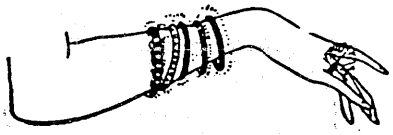

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FOR A BETTER LIFE IN THE HEIGHTS

COME TO HEAR MAYOR BRET SCHUNDLER
AT OUR NEXT RNA MEETING ON TUESDAY,
OCTOBER 12TH at 7:15 PM

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NEWSLETTER

A HALLOWEEN POEM

"Knock" "Knock" Let me see
Who has come to pay a call on me.
Oh my goodness, what a scare!
There are little aliens standing there.
But wait a minute, I do recall,
I know these small folk afterall.
They're the neighborhood kids
Here to seek
The annual Halloween trick or treat!

Maria Tuzzo